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Abstract

Calculates the likely population of Orcs in Middle-earth at various times based on Tolkien's use of the military terms host, army, and legion. Uses *The Silmarillion* and several volumes of *The History of Middle-earth* to "show a developing concept of Orc military organization and, by inference, an idea of Orc demographics."

Additional Keywords

Tolkien, J.R.R.—Characters—Orcs—Demographics; Tolkien, J.R.R.—Characters—Orcs—History; Tolkien, J.R.R.—Characters—Orcs—Military organization

Orc Hosts, Armies and Legions:

A Demographic Study

Tom Loback

Throughout the writings of J.R.R. Tolkien his Lords of Evil are aided by various servants, slaves and henchmen. Ever present in the tales, are the Orcs. This race of vile and foul creatures served all the Dark Lords through the long history of Middle-earth. With the publication, editing and analysis by Christopher Tolkien of earlier versions, variants and verse forms of the tales; it is possible to show a developing concept of Orc military organization and, by inference, an idea of Orc demographics. This article presents a theory that attempts to delineate this development, define its terminology and demonstrate its dynamic application. This theory is necessarily tied to a previous article published in *Mythlore* 51 entitled, "The Kindreds, Houses and Population of the Elves during the First Age" (hereafter called "KHPE"). Together they are part of an overall, general demographic study of the folk of Middle-earth and Beleriand in particular. The basic assumption is that Tolkien may have used certain phrases and descriptions to indicate very specific things about Orc military forces. While this is not consistently true of the earlier works, a development can be shown so that some conclusions, albeit highly speculative, can be made about the use of these descriptions in the final form in which *The Silmarillion* has been published. There will be no attempt to deal with the somewhat contradictory and controversial, not to say mysterious creation and multiplication of the Orcs. What will be shown is the resulting effect on the size of Orc military forces. This will remain constant regardless of the form of Orc reproduction.

Essentially, all revolves around Tolkien's constant use of three words to describe Orc military forces: *host*, *army*, and *legion*. It is possible to chart the many occurrences of these words concerning the forces of Angband. In their various occurrences and with various adjectives, they seem interchangeable, synonymous and of no use in coming to any guess at the numbers of Orcs they describe. Consider, however, that numerous specific numerical references would have obviously detracted from the mood and vision created. Within the context of the stories the chroniclers and characters had only a limited sense of what they faced, and this was further dimmed by the retelling of the tales through the imagined ages involved. However, the tales of the battles hint at a greater logic and consistency than is seen at first glance.

One tale, in particular, best exemplifies the deliberate distinction between the use of the word *host* and the word *army*. That this distinction can also be demonstrated to exist in *The Silmarillion* will be shown later. This tale, in its many versions, is *The Fall of Nargothrond*. Without trying to deal with the various changes and developments of

characters and, initially plot; a narrow focus is placed on an unchanging aspect. Namely, that Nargothrond was destroyed by Orc forces. The list below shows the excerpted descriptions of that force, in the chronological order of their writing as determined by Christopher Tolkien.

- I. 1919 *Lost Tales* II p. 84 "great hordes... an army of Orcs"
- II. 1918-26 *Lays of Beleriand* p. 79 "host of iron... Orcs unnumbered."
- III. 1926-30 *Shaping of Middle-earth*. p. 30 "a great army."
- IV. 1930-37 *Shaping of Middle-earth*. p. 126 "a great army... the Orchost."
- V. 1930-37 *Shaping of Middle-earth*. p. 305 "a host of Orcs."
- VI. 1937 *The Lost Road* p. 139 "a host of Orcs."
- VII. *The Silmarillion* p. 212 "the great host... the host of Morgoth."

By the time of IV, it is seen that "a great army" is used as the equivalent of "the Orc-host" and not "an army". Assuming an *army* has a standard size, this suggests that a *host* is a force somewhat larger than an *army* (e.g., a great army). This can be supported, somewhat, by turning to *The Silmarillion* (herein after called S.). On page 96, the Orc forces coming south into Beleriand are described as "the eastern host of Orcs" and "the Orc host in the west". It is the western host which lends support to this idea, as that same host is later described on p. 106 as "the *armies* of Morgoth". This suggests that the word *host*, as used in S., can mean at least two *armies*. More support of the notion that an *army* is smaller than a *host* is found on p. 116 S. where Morgoth sends "an army" in which "the Orcs were not in great number" and does not refer to it as a host.

Ignoring apparent contradictions of this elsewhere, at least temporarily, and postulating on the strength of somewhat flimsy evidence, assume the following to be true for the S.:

1. There is a basic military formation of Orc forces called an *army*.
2. An *army* has a standard size, or field strength.
3. A *host* refers to a formation of forces that is either:
 - A. larger than an army of standard field strength
 - B. at least two armies of standard field strength.

If the numbers of Elves in "KHPE" are generally accepted, comparisons can be made from the estimated warrior strength of the Elves, at certain battles, with the descriptions of the forces at the battles to deduce a general estimate as to the size of the postulated Standard Orc *army* (herein after called "SOA"). In Dagon-nuin-Giliath, the Second Battle, the host of Morgoth is described as outnumbering the Fëanorians¹. Using "KHPE", Fëanor's force can be estimated as 15-20,000 strong. By taking a very literal

approach to Tolkien's description, it is assumed that had Orc strength been twice, or more than twice, Fëanor's; it would have been worthy of note. Certainly, such differences are noted elsewhere. In the Fifth Battle, Fingon and Turgon are described as being assailed by "a tide of foes thrice greater".³ A medial estimate of the Orc-host would be something under 30,000. Again taking the literal approach and saying: since this Orc-host is not described as armies, whereas the western Orc-host is; then this *host* fits the case of assumption 3A. The 30,000 Orcs make up a force that is larger than an army of standard field strength, but not made up of two or more *armies*. Both S.⁴ and *The Hobbit*⁵ indicate that Wolves and Wolf-riders were a separate formation from an Orc *army*. This would suggest that the make-up of this *army* is one "SOA" and a large auxiliary force of Wolf-riders. As this *host* was sent by Morgoth straight from Angband, it hadn't yet suffered any battle casualties, indicating it was near full strength. Assuming the *army* to be larger than the auxiliary force, a fair guess would be 18-27,000 for the *army* and 2,000 to 10,000 for the auxiliaries. A bit of rounding off, up and down, gives 20-25,000 as a working number for the "SOA".

If this theoretic distinction between *host* and *army* is accepted as a deliberate act by Tolkien, a curious thing happens upon examining the Second Battle in its written chronological order. In *Lost Tales* I pp. 238-240, neither *host* or *army* is used to describe the Orc force. In *Shaping Of Middle-earth*, p. 22, this force is described as a *host*; and again on p. 101, in the Quenta, it is again called a *host*. Yet, in the Earliest Annals of Valinor (herein after "EAV"), it is called an *army*, only to become a *host* again in S. p. 106. While this seems to dispel any notion that there is a distinction made in which a *host* is larger than an *army*, it actually supports it; if it is accepted that this part of the Annals was written, or at least amended, somewhat later than its corresponding section in the Quenta.

There is an addition to the "EAV" by Tolkien which supports and explains why he may have wanted to reduce the size of the force attacking Fëanor. Footnote 18, p. 271, introduces Thingol and his allies as combatants and necessitates a division, diversion and deduction in the forces that face Fëanor. Also, Fëanor's abandonment of the other Noldor has reduced the size of his force and this element of the story has not been fully developed. It is the contention here that during the writing of the Quenta and the Annals, Tolkien began to use *army* and *host*, *great army*, *main host*, etc. as an Order of Battle to help him make adjustments to forces because of the numerous changes that were now taking place in the narratives of the developing stories. This is further supported, to some extent, in the changes made to the Fall of Nargothrond from version to version.

The idea of Beren and Finrod leading a large part of the *army* of Nargothrond to defeat is abandoned.⁶ Without this loss of a sizable portion of the *army* of Elves, and with the refinement of Celegorn and Curufin leaving a part of their people to Nargothrond; the Elven force, which is to

face the Orcs that defeat it, has increased considerably in size. So too, the mission of the Orc force has increased. Led by Glaurung, the Orcs must now also defeat the Men of Brethil on the left flank of the advance on Nargothrond.

"KHPE" gives Turin and Orodreth command of 15-20,000 Elven warriors, including some 3,000 Fëanorian cavalry. This force, similar in size to Fëanor's at the Second Battle, would be more than a fair match for the Orc force of "Q". ("great army... the Orc host") and "AB." By this description the Orc force would be similar in size to the one Fëanor faced, if these terms are accepted as standardized. It would seem to be Tolkien's intention that it be folly that Turin and the Elves of Nargothrond should attempt to best Morgoth in the open field. The odds against them were to be overwhelming. This would hardly be the case against an Orc-host of perhaps 30,000; led by a Dragon who had been bested once by horse archers and who proved somewhat skittish, when it came to physical insult on his person in the Fifth Battle. A significant increase in the size of this force would be expected in order to support the narrative and plot - and so there is. In *The Silmarillion* this force becomes finally "the great host".

At this point it will be helpful to show a plausible, overall order of battle, or Table of Organization for Morgoth's Orc forces and afterwards give the arguments to support these conclusions. Also, general estimates of strength will be given, derived from the previous working number for the "SOA". These general estimates should be taken only as that. Orcs being Orcs, not too much should be expected of them on the level of a highly disciplined and organized military body. These estimates are also the paper, or full strength; not real, or field strength.

- band/party* 50 to 100 Orcs
- small company/company* (2 or more bands or parties) 100 to 500
- large company* 500 to 2500
- legion* a number of companies, or an army subdivision 10,000 to 15,000 total.
- army* commonly two, perhaps three, legions 20,000 to 30,000 total.
- Great army* an army plus less than 10,000 auxiliaries 30-35,000 total. *Host* two armies, or a great army plus additional auxiliaries 40,000 to 50,000 total.
- Great host* several armies, or two hosts 50,000 to 75,000 total.
- Main host* numerous armies, several hosts 75,000 to 150,000 total.

Note: Great army and great host are used by Tolkien, on occasion, to generally describe the forces of Angband and mean all the unnumbered hosts. Also, main host is used as a modifying description of a force already described in some way and then means the main battle, center or majority of that force.

Band/party/company These terms are used, almost exclusively, for small actions, or to describe groups of raiding or foraging Orcs. They occur throughout the

corpus, sometimes with numbers attached but rarely exceeding the estimates.⁷

Large company. Not much to go on here, but it does seem to refer to larger bodies of troops that are smaller than legions.

Legion This is a most significant description, and the first real clue to what Tolkien may be doing. Its literal definition naturally suggests the ancient Romans of our own past. While Tolkien does not mean to say that Orcs were Romans, there are some interesting similarities which, when combined with some linguistic clues, are very revealing. First, they are both predominantly infantry. Second, the main bodies of troops fight hand to hand, with swords or short thrusting-spears. Third, they tend to be heavily armored troops that fight in close order, shoulder to shoulder. Stretching the analogy a bit shows Morgoth's over-lordship to be akin to the corrupt dictators of the worst periods of the Roman Empire. However, if *legion* is a deliberate choice in this sense, it is probably meant to suggest something like a Roman Consular Army of the Republican period⁸. These were made up of two Roman legions, each of which had an allied Latin legion attached to it. This would support the idea that a *host* (i.e. Consular Army) was made up of two *armies* (i.e. the combined pairs of the Roman and Latin legions) and that an *army* was made up of two *legions* (i.e. one Roman and one Latin).

In S., p. 157, the description of the battle where the Orc legion is destroyed in Brethil, has no mention of army or host. This suggests the participants were less than army size. It is also plausible that Beleg's axe armed Sindar was only a portion of Thingol's forces, to judge from an earlier description⁹. The Orc legion would seem to be the balance of the army used to storm Tol Sirion, and that army part of a host commanded by Sauron used to: take Tol Sirion, subjugate Dorthonion, invade Brethil and raid the North March of Doriath.¹⁰

Army. That the army is a subdivision of a host is further supported by linguistic information from Gnomish Lexicon, *Lost Tales I* p. 264, where the following entry is listed: *hoth*-folk, people; *hothri*-army; *hothron*-captain and S. p. 360 where *hoth* is redefined as host, horde. The first indicates that *hothri*, or *army*, is a smaller part of a greater whole - the *hoth*. The second clarifies the situation so that a *hothri* is a subdivision of a *hoth*, or *host*, now more specifically a military formation in its use by Tolkien.¹¹ Tantalizing is the Gnomish word for the Romans - *rum-hoth*, *Lost Tales II*, p. 294, possible evidence of the connection between Orcs and Romans.¹²

Host. The arguments for a *host* being something larger than an *army* have already been made earlier. That *host* may at times refer more specifically to a two *army* formation is supported indirectly by the references to "armies" in the western host. In "KHPE", Cirdan has some 7500 to 10,000 warriors. Two Orc *armies* would total 40,000 to 50,000, certainly more than enough to defeat the unsupported army of Cirdan and bottle him up in his cities. The

sieges of the two cities is also suggestive of two *armies*. The size of Thingol's force, based on "KHPE", is 26,000 to 33,000 and suggests that anything larger than 40,000 to 50,000 Orcs in the eastern host would have been very difficult to overcome. Theoretically, the Roman model is logical to accept to some extent, at this point.

Great host/main host. These are modifying descriptions that depend mostly on the circumstances in which they are used. The idea that a main host is larger than a great host can be seen in the descriptions of the Orc forces of the Fifth Battle and Fall of Nargothrond in S.. They certainly refer to numbers of armies or hosts. It is the Fifth Battle which can provide a test for this theory, especially with the publication of *Shaping Of Middle-earth* (herein after *SoME*). An analysis of the numbers will also provide an insight into the total population of Angband, as Tolkien states "Angband was emptied."¹³

First, a brief discussion of the chain of command is in order. Prior to 155 1st Age, Orc forces were commanded by Orc captains. After numerous disastrous defeats, "Morgoth perceived now that the Orcs unaided were no match for the Noldor."¹⁴ It is plausible to assume that he meant, in part, that more formidable leadership was required, in the field. That this might be so, is supported by references to Gothmog as Captain of Angband and Glaurung leading the Orcs against Nargothrond, as well as Sauron's campaign against Tol Sirion.¹⁵ From the accounts of Boldog's raid in *Lays Of Beleriand*, the War of the Orcs and Dwarves and the Battle of Five Armies it is apparent that Orc captains continued to lead Orc *armies*, but that some more powerful servant was needed to lead larger formations like *hosts*.

In the Fifth Battle Gothmog is the High-captain of Angband and overall commander, Glaurung led the Beasts of Angband and other Dragons in the reserve. Sauron is not mentioned. There is a captain in the west of the advance forces. Who leads the *hosts* of the *main host* issuing from Thangoridrim based on this chain of command? The logical conclusion would be the other Balrogs. If it is the Balrogs, then a very reasonable picture can be made of these forces by using S., *SOME*, "KHPE". Tolkien states in a late note that there were, at most, seven Balrogs.¹⁶ If each of these commanded a *host* at the battle that would mean there were 280,000 to 350,000 Orcs, plus Glaurung's reserve. Using "KHPE" and some educated guessing, Fingon's command without Turgon's 10,000, was around 40,000 to 45,000. Morgoth, with some idea of Fingon's strength, sent "a force seeming great"¹⁷ to lure Fingon into a premature attack. A *host* would hardly have been enough to deceive Fingon. There were some sort of riders present, indicating auxiliaries and suggesting a *great host*; if one also considers the description of the ground it occupies. In any case, over 75,000. The reserve is stated in AB of *SOME* to be 100,000 Orcs strong;¹⁸ or the equivalent of two *hosts*. If Gothmog leads one and another Balrog has the other, then the other four Balrogs would be the captains making up the *main host* (the fifth Balrog leads the advance). If each commands a *host* that would

give a total of 160,000 to 200,000 for the *main host*. More likely is that Gothmog is in overall command, and two other Balrogs captain the reserves. This would give the *main host* 120,000 to 150,000. In either case the main body would be expected to be greater than the van or the reserve. Checking this against a comparative statement later in the battle, that "Fingon and Turgon were assailed by a tide of foes thrice greater than all the force that was left to them";¹⁹ gives a comparable number for the *main host*, assuming the Elven losses brought their numbers down to 40 or 45,000. The total Orc warrior population of Angband, at the start of the battle can therefore be estimated to be 295,000 to 375,000. As can be seen, this theory along with the proposed chain of command agrees generally with such information there is on Orc warrior numbers for this battle. Further, such can be used to estimate strengths at other times and very quickly. It is possible that Tolkien had something of the kind in mind so that he could quickly adjust the numbers he had in mind in response to any significant plot change. It also seems likely that he retained this Order of Battle throughout his writings to facilitate his analysis and description of any battle containing Orcs. For if this theory is applied to the battle before the Gates of Mordor at the end of the 3rd Age, it serves well. Here is the description of that battle and how this theory can be checked again. "The Men of the West were trapped... forces ten times and more than ten times their match would ring them in a sea of enemies." Earlier the forces issuing from the Black Gate are called "a great host" and they are joined by "an army of Easterlings"²⁰. By this theory the *great host* would be more than 50,000 Orcs and the *army* of Easterlings 20-25,000; or a total of something over 75,000. Karen Wynn Fonstad in the *Atlas Of Middle-earth*, p. 154, gives 6,000 as the total for the Men of the West, and 75,000 is certainly "ten times and more than ten times their match".

Having established the plausibility of the SOA and checking it against two widely separated periods, it now can be used to establish Orc warrior strength at various periods of the history of Middle-earth.

Overview of Orc-warrior Strength

It is probable that the Orcs reached their greatest numbers under Morgoth during the 1st Age. Certainly his power was far greater than Sauron's, at any time. He was called the greatest of the Valar, while Sauron was one of the lesser order of the Maiar. Further, a strong case can be made that the Orcs are physical manifestations of Morgoth's will and perhaps limited in numbers because of that. Be that as it may, the peak of Morgoth's Orc-warrior strength occurs in the year 455 of the 1st Age, just before the Dagor Bragollach, following 400 years of careful building, equipping and husbanding by Morgoth and his Thanes. Subsequently, there is not much possibility of Morgoth again achieving that strength, given the later comparative strengths and staggering losses in the battles through the fall of Gondolin. Therefore, as a general rule, all later Orc strengths can be measured against this num-

ber, with the assumption that the conditions that resulted in this optimum were never again achieved by the Lords of Darkness, whoever they were.

The estimate for the 1st Age peak is 500,000 to 650,000. Between this and Sauron's strength during the War of the Ring can be placed the estimates of the War of the Elves and Sauron, and the War of the Last Alliance, as probable peaks during the 2nd Age. That these strengths might be higher than those of the War of the Ring is based on the idea that Tolkien's entire Mythos is composed as a downward spiral, in regards to the power of the Evil Incarnate especially. That each subsequent manifestation is demonstrably weaker than its predecessor, is set out in the fascinating paper given by Lisa Anne Mende at the 1987 Mythopoeic Conference, called "...And Yet Not So Many Nor So Fair...Diminution and Substitution in *The Silmarillion* and *The Lord Of The Rings*".

1st Age Estimates: First and Second Battles, 1st Age circa minus 5 years of Sun:

eastern host = 40,000 to 50,000 (2 armies)
western host = 40,000 to 50,000 (2 armies)
Hithlum host = 30,000 to 35,000 (great army)
Total = 110,000 to 135,000

Third Battle, 1st Age circa year 80,000 to 100,000 (2 hosts)
pass of Sirion = 15,000 to 30,000 (legion/army+ aux.)
Maglor's Gap = 15,000 to 30,000 (legion/army+ aux.)
Total = 110,000 to 160,000

Firth of Drengist, 1st Age circa year 150
an army = 15,000 to 25,000 Fourth Battle,
1st Age year 455-456; including forces used until year 472.
"black armies in multitudes...the hosts"
general estimates = 500,000 to 650,000

Fifth Battle, 1st Age year 472.

Total = 295,000 to 350,000

War of Wrath, 1st Age circa 550

Total + 400.00 to 500,000

2nd Age Estimates:

The War of the Elves and Sauron was the period of Sauron's greatest territorial expansion, during which he nearly succeeded in conquering Middle-earth. That he intended to use the rings to enslave the free peoples of Middle-earth is an indication that whatever his military strength was, he deemed it insufficient means to bring about his ends. Yet, when his Ring-spell failed, he began the war suddenly to pre-empt the unification and mobilization of his opponents. He nearly succeeded by the force of his Orc-hosts, which he led personally, to conquer Middle-earth.

In the 1st Age, he had commanded a *host* against Tol Sirion. Now, as the premier Evil Lord, enhanced in power by the One Ring, he could easily have commanded a *great host* (i.e., two *hosts*, or around 100,000 Orcs) in the field. Details of the campaign, as set out in *Unfinished Tales*, pp. 236-239, support this estimate. Imladris (Rivendell) is besieged by "The army,"²¹ and Sauron advances on London with all his "scattered forces" called in, less a "strong

detachment" (the *army* besieging Imladris). As Lindon is now his main objective, it would be unlikely that he would divert one half his *host* to contain Elrond. Further, one half would surely not be described as a "strong detachment". He called up new forces which, without a servant of stronger evil will available, must have been an Orc-captain, or two, in command of an *army* or two separate *armies*. All told, Sauron had between 125,000-150,000 in field forces.

Following his complete defeat, Sauron fled back to Mordor and was left unmolested. This implies that he still had sufficient strength to present an intimidating defense of Mordor, perhaps a garrison of 50,000. His total at the start of the war, in Mordor alone is 175,000-200,000 Orc-warriors. These were raised over the 700 years from the establishment of Barad-dûr until the war. Comparing this with the more than 500,000 that Morgoth raises over 400 years gives an idea of their relative abilities and power.

Over the next 1500 years, Sauron seems to have some difficulty in replacing his losses, as he makes a considerable effort to gain allies from the Men of the East. Perhaps he is disenchanted with the Orcs because of their inability to stand up to his foes (although it must be imagined that he would have been victorious, had not the Numenorian arrived unforseen). In any case, he is completely overawed by the might of Ar-Pharazon and declines a military contest. This indirect method of defeating this adversary allows Sauron to preserve such strength as he has accumulated for the later war that ends the 2nd Age. It is likely that Sauron was able, in 1700 years (even with his first disembodiment during the final 200), to nearly double his Orc forces. Given that he was left unmolested and suffered few losses during that time, the estimate for Orc-warrior strength at the outset of the War of the Last Alliance is 350,000-400,000.

War of the Elves and Sauron, circa year 1693.

Total = 175,000 to 200,000

War of the Last Alliance, circa year 3429

Total = 350,000 to 400,000

3rd Age Estimates

With Sauron's second disembodiment and the loss of the One Ring, the Orcs diminish and scatter, seeking other evil wills to center on during the early 3rd Age. Using the established parameters and Tolkien's descriptions, the strengths for major Orc forces can be generally estimated for key periods prior to the War of the Ring.

Angmar, 3rd Age 1409, "a great host."²² This was probably his peak strength as war seems to have been constant afterwards, until his defeat in 1975 3rd Age. The total is 50,000-75,000, including Mannish allies.

The War of the Dwarves and Orcs, 3rd Age 2793, Azog is described as commanding "a great host of foes."²³ Normally, an Orc-captain could not handle 40,000-50,000 Orcs in the field, however the Balrog actually rules in Moria, and his powerful will would make this *HOST* possible. Taking into account the earlier losses in this war and the

Orc-tribes of the North may have totalled 60,000-100,000 at the inception of the war.

Elsewhere and at other times, Orc-warrior strength probably did not exceed an *army's* strength, perhaps not even a *legion's*. For without an overriding will of great evil their own natural hatred of even each other would tend to divide them into smaller tribal groups. Further, it would seem, the more distant they are from a source of powerful evil will, the more diminished they are in physical strength, size, intelligence, organization, equipment and numbers. A case could be made, based on Glaurung's commands, that certain Dragons could cause a gathering or increase of Orcs in their area.

The War of the Ring, in all its great detail through *The Hobbit* and *The Lord Of The Rings*, allows for some of the clearest estimates. The battle before the Gates of Mordor, discussed above, gives a clear estimate of Sauron's remaining strength at 40,000-50,000 Orcs, not counting slaves and minor garrisons of Mordor's strong points.

Dol Guldur is the mightiest of Sauron's forward outposts at this time. It was captured by two or three Nazgul,²⁴ one of which must have been primarily a messenger, rather than a field commander. The forces of Dol guldur had two major objectives in the war: to conquer Lorien and Thranduil's realm. A conservative estimate for these forces would be two *hosts*, or 100,000 warriors. The three assaults on Lorien suggest more, perhaps another *army* of 25,000 that also functioned as a reserve and garrison. The initial attack against Thranduil in June 3018 was likely conducted by a *legion* - given its limited objective as a *razzia*. The major assault on Thranduil in Dagor Duroth, the Battle under the trees of Mirkwood, was probably conducted by an *army*, as more strength would be needed against the stronger and more critical position of Lorien.

The Morgul-host was commanded by the Witch-king and could easily have exceeded two *hosts*. Fonstad gives 45,000 as a minimum strength.²⁵ This is exceedingly low, given Tolkien's descriptions and the above assumptions. Further, the statements that the southern fiefs of Gondor held back all but "a tithe" of their strength, means that the 2800 men sent could have been as much as 28,000 - if tithe is understood to have its medieval meaning of 10%, which is likely. For the Witch-king to even consider laying siege with 45,000 (including 18,000 cavalry, of very limited use during sieges) would have been folly. A more realistic estimate is at least two *hosts* of Orcs, totalling 100,000. There could conceivably be more, considering the presence of five Nazgul and the Orc forces around Osgiliath. Their Mannish allies must also have been stronger, probably 30,000-50,000.

Tolkien's statement that this was not the "greatest of the hosts that Mordor now sent forth"²⁶ is difficult to account for, as one must assume that Angmar, as Captain of Mordor, was in command of the main field force and no other leader could have handled more. Also there is no account of any other force leaving Mordor. It must probab-

ly be that this refers to Mordor generally and that the setting forth of the hosts of Dol Guldur (some 100,000) is what is referred to as the greater host. So the Morgul host was probably 50,000 Orcs and 25,000 allied Men, which then combined with a similar number in East Osgiliath.

For Saruman at Isengard, it must be concluded that he was no more capable of increasing Orc leadership qualities than Morgoth or Sauron, even if his cross-breeds with Men produced a marginally more intelligent Orc (the difference in I.Q. between Ugluk and Grisnakh is hardly perceptible). Since anything larger than an *army* would have to be led by Saruman himself, as he had no servants equal to the Nazgul, the highest estimate can only be a *host*. As he does not take the field with his troops, and nearly all the forces of Isengard are sent out; the SOA suggests that there was no more than an Orc *army* of 20,000, perhaps only a *legion*. In fact, Merry estimates the last column to leave to be "10,000 at the very least"²⁶ and Isengard is described as being "emptied". Other evidence indicates a number of *large companies* operating in detachments apart from the main body. All this suggest a total under 20,000 Orcs.

While Moria is impossible to estimate clearly at the time of the War, the North is somewhat clearer. It seems unlikely that the Orcs of Moria exceeded the 5,000-10,000 range after Azanulbizar, even with the Balrog present and some Uruks sent from Mordor. However, Moria is likely the largest concentration of Orcs outside of Mordor, Dol Guldur and Isengard. Indeed, if we assume that the Orcs who attacked the Lonely Mountain in the Battle of Five Armies to be subject to the SOA, it can be reasoned that since the "vast host" of Orcs and Wolves were two of the five armies,²⁷ then Bolg commanded over a *legion's* strength of Orcs but less than a full *army* (given the haste with which he assembled and marched from Gundabad). As Bolg was no Evil Lord and none was near, as a typical Orc-captain he led perhaps 20,000 warriors and some thousands of wolf-riders and wolves. In *The Hobbit* Tolkien states that "three parts of the goblin warriors of the North" were killed.²⁸ This likely means 3/4. With most of Bolg's troops slain at the battle, other than those left behind at Gundabad, a sound estimate of Orc strength before the battle would be 25,000, and some 6,000-7,000 Orcs remaining in the North (from Cirith Forn en Andrath, the High Pass, through Goblin-town, Gundabad, the Grey Mts. and the Withered Heath) subsequently, with some small increase by the War of the Ring.

Angmar at Mt. Gundabad, circa year 1400.

"a great host" = 50,000 to 75,000 with mannish allies

War of the Orcs and Dwarves, circa year 2793

Total at inception = 60,000 to 100,000

"a great host of foes" (Azanulbizar) = 40,000 to 50,000

Battle of Five Armies, year 2941

Two of the Five Armies' Goblin army = 15,000 to 20,000

Wolf army (aux.) = 5,000 to 10,000

Total at inception = 25,000 to 30,000

War of the Ring, circa year 3010

Dol Guldur = 100,000 to 125,000

Mordor = 150,000 to 225,000

Sauron's total = 250,000 to 350,000

Saruman's total = 10,000 to 20,000

Moria and North = 5,000 to 15,000

In conclusion, it can be seen that the use of a Standard Orc Army and its Table of Organization by Tolkien is a distinct possibility and that its form and size as suggested here, stands up well, in the face of such evidentiary numbers that are available. Considering that *The Silmarillion* and *The Lord Of The Rings*, if not *The Hobbit*, are books written against the panorama of vast wars it is worthwhile to gain a better understanding of the instruments of those wars. Worthwhile because it not only clarifies the odds against the heroes of these struggles, but leads to a greater understanding of Middle-earth and its peoples and cultures. The study of Elven demographics in "KHPE" gave a firm base from which to estimate their Orc opponents in 1st Age battles, that led to an unravelling of Orc military organization which remains demonstrably constant through the history of Middle-earth, this in turn gives a base for comparative estimates in the 2nd and 3rd Ages of all the peoples who come into conflict with the Orcs. By knowing how many folk lived here or there at this time or that, some more insight may be gained as to the dynamics of life and culture in Middle-earth, for those of us that want to walk further along the road that "goes ever on". ☞

Notes

1. Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Silmarillion* edited by Christopher Tolkien, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1977 p. 106.
2. *Ibid.* - p. 193.
3. *Ibid.* - pp. 106-107.
4. *Ibid.* - p. 192.
5. Tolkien, J.R.R., *The Hobbit*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1966, p. 292.
6. Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Shaping Of Middle-earth* edited by Christopher Tolkien, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1986, p. 25.
7. Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lays Of Beleriand* edited by Christopher Tolkien, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1985, p. 225.
8. Dupuy and Dupuy, *The Encyclopedia Of Military History*, New York, Harper and Row, 1977, p. 72.
9. Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Silmarillion* edited by Christopher Tolkien, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1977, p. 94. See also *Unfinished Tales*, p. 78, and for a detailed discussion of Sindarin Army organization and the Gwador, or brotherhoods of knights that make up the army, see Loback, T., *Halls Of The Elven-king*, Charlottesville, Iron Crown Enterprises, 1988, pp. 8-10.
10. Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lays Of Beleriand* edited by Christopher Tolkien, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1985, p. 337, lines 255-261.
11. Loback, Tom, "Hoth, Hothri, Hothron", *Parma Eldarlambron* 8, provides a detailed look at the linguistic aspect of "SOA".
12. Tolkien, J.R.R., *Lost Tales*, Vol. II, edited by Christopher Tolkien, London, George Allen and Unwin, pp. 294, 306, 309, 378; compare with *glamhoth*, *Unfinished Tales*, pp. 39, 54, *Silmarillion*, p. 360; *Lost Road* pp. 233, 358, 364, 377; *Lost Tales II* pp. 160, 340.
13. See note 4.
14. *Ibid.* - p. 116.
15. Tolkien, J.R.R., *The Lays Of Beleriand* edited by Christopher Tolkien, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1985, p. 337 line 255; *Lost Tales II*, p. 184, "the marshal of the hosts"; *Silmarillion*, p. 193.

(Continued on page 26)

"a clucking and screaming as if it was the hoarse voice of some monstrous bird" and Tash himself appears in person.

The first skirmish of the Last Battle has now begun, and the Calormenes steadily drive the friends of Narnia toward the Stable door, calling out "Tash! Tash! The great god Tash! Inexorable Tash!" At the Battles' height, Tirian flings the Tarkaan into the Stable:

A terrible figure was coming towards them.... It had a vulture's head and four arms.

Thou has called me into Narnia, Rishda Tarkaan. Here I am.... What has thou to say? (LB, p. 124)

This at last is no wraith, but the Lord of Death himself, who pounces upon the Tarkaan like the bird of prey he is. Now, a voice is heard: "Begone, Monster, and take your lawful prey to your own place: in the name of Aslan," and with that, "The hideous creature vanished with the Tarkaan still under his arm." (Ibid.) It is the voice of the High King Peter. Servants of Aslan are able to drive out demons in His Name.

This is the last ever seen of Tash in Narnia. Tirian is now inside the Stable and meets the seven friends of Narnia in their eternal form, and they report that Tash has Already made away with Shift the Ape. Now Aslan appears, and Tirian flings himself at the Lion's feet to receive the "well done" (LB, p. 138) of the good and faithful servant.

Aslan has come to bring about the end of Narnia, and to take from it into his own Land all who will. When all is at an end, there is found "a young Calormene sitting under a chestnut tree beside a cold stream of water. It was Emeth." (LB, p. 151) When he entered the Stable so boldly, the Calormene had met not Tash but Aslan, who greeted him with these sweetest of words: "Child, all the service thou has done to Tash, I account as service done to me." (LB, p. 156) This is so,

Not because he and I are one, but because we are opposites. For I and he are of such different kinds that no service which is vile can be done to me, and none which is not vile can be done to him.

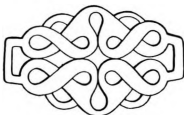
Perhaps Lewis never wrote more important words. They are also the very last words in *The Last Battle* about Tash. At the conclusion of this passage, Aslan says, "all find what they truly seek," the story of Tash is at an end. He has no place in Aslan's Country. And there, we, who know more that Lewis at the time he wrote *The Last Battle*, must leave the god of the Calormenes, whether he represents death, or Satan, or the local divinity of an archaic kingdom, or any of the false gods worshipped in our world. Not all mysteries are capable of resolution this side of the Stable door.

Endnotes

1. C.S. Lewis, *The Horse and His Boy* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1954), p. 76. (Hereinafter cited as *HHB*.)
2. Donald Taylor, "Theological thoughts about evil," in David Parkin, *The Anthropology of Evil* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), p. 34.
3. C.S. Lewis, *The Last Battle* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956), p. 25 (Hereinafter cited as *LB*.)

Endnotes to *A Grief Observed*, (continued from page 9)

27. Perhaps this seems to me to be a natural supposition because many times in the years since I first read Lewis' *Till We Have Faces*, as I have lived my own life, I have seen the reflection of many of Orual's experiences in my life, and I too have said, "That's it!" I have also marveled that Lewis could so accurately depict the psychological processes of a woman, and realized that an idea he had had many years previously did not come to fruition until after he had known Joy.
28. *Grief*, pp. 43-49 in particular. Lewis used the phrase at other places in the book as well.
29. Sheldon Vanuaken, *A Severe Mercy*, (New York: Bantam Books, 1977), p. 231.
30. Wilson, C. S. Lewis, pp. xi-xii. Not only did Lewis lose his mother in 1908, but his grandfather and uncle as well, piling grief on grief. See Kathryn Lindscoog, C. S. Lewis: *Mere Christian* (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1987), p. 75.
31. C. S. Lewis, *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1964), pp. 42-43.
32. *Leinen Lands*, p. 131.
33. *Letters to Malcolm*, p. 41.



Endnotes to *Hosts, Armies....* (continued from page 16)

16. Tolkien, J.R.R., *The Book of Lost Tales Vol. II* edited by Christopher Tolkien, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1984, p. 213, note; *Lays of Beleriand*, p. 281, line 3517. One wonders as to what Tolkien meant to do with the thousands of Balrogs in these earlier tales. This author suggests that they would have become the Trolls.
17. Tolkien, J.R.R., *The Silmarillion*, p. 191.
18. Tolkien, J.R.R., *The Shaping Of Middle-earth* edited by Christopher Tolkien, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1986, p. 302.
19. Tolkien, J.R.R., *The Silmarillion*, p. 193; see also *The Encyclopedia Of Military History*, p. 101, for a good rule of thumb when estimating battle casualties in drawn fights or routs; *Lost Tales Vol. I*, p. 241, states that "nearly half of all the Gnomes and Men who fought there were slain," as the final casualty toll.
20. Tolkien, J.R.R., *The Lord of the Rings, Return of the King*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1966, p. 167.
21. Tolkien, J.R.R., *Unfinished Tales* edited by Christopher Tolkien, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1980, p. 239.
22. Tolkien, J.R.R., *The Lord of the Rings, Appendix A*, p. 320.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 355.
24. Tolkien, J.R.R., *Unfinished Tales*, p. 352.
25. Fonstad, K.W., *The Atlas Of Middle-earth*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1981, p. 151.
26. Tolkien, J.R.R., *The Lord Of The Rings, The Two Towers*, p. 171.
27. Tolkien, J.R.R., *The Hobbit*, p. 303.

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- J.R.R. Tolkien: *The Hobbit, The Lord Of The Rings*.
 J.R.R. Tolkien and edited by Christopher Tolkien: *The Silmarillion, Unfinished Tales, Lost Tales Vol. I, Lost Tales Vol. II, The Lays Of Beleriand, The Shaping Of Middle-earth, The Lost Road*.
 Karen Wynn Fonstad: *The Atlas Of Middle-earth*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1981, p. 151.
 Lisa Anne Mende: "...And Yet Not So Many Nor So Fair...Diminution and Substitution in *The Silmarillion and The Lord Of The Rings*".
 Tom Loback: "Kindreds, Houses and Population of the Elves during the First Age," "Hoth, Hothri, Hothron," *Halls Of The Elven-king*.
 Dupuy and Dupuy: *The Encyclopedia Of Military History*.